

Annual Report

2021 - 2022



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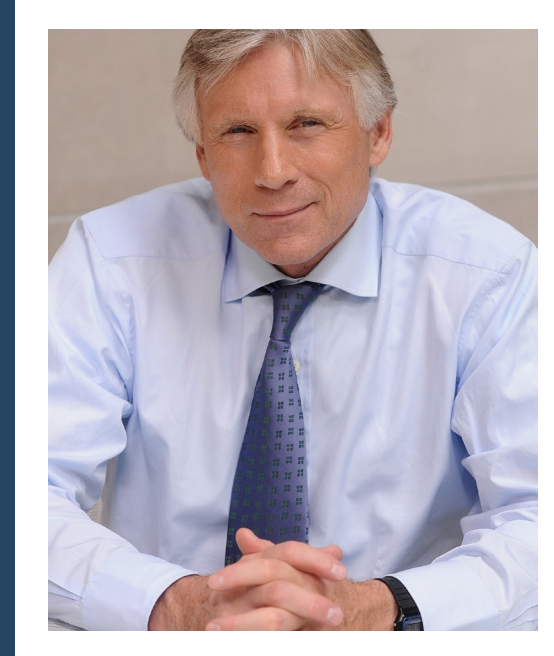
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A Message from the President

Lee C. Bollinger,
President, Columbia University



The Columbia Global Centers are thriving, with nine centers across four continents, and more to come. The mission of our Centers is to serve as the University's physical and intellectual presence around the world—they facilitate and curate faculty work, provide educational opportunities for students, and connect us with people and ideas shaping our global society.



Reflections from the Director



It has been a warm year in West and North Africa, and heat waves -as well as floods- became more frequent. From climate and public health to politics and the economy, these are changing and challenging times that the geopolitical games have complicated.

Nonetheless, our team kept growing, and, since the dissemination of Covid-19 vaccines, we have resumed in-person activities at Columbia Global Centers|Tunis. We have also increased our partnerships, be it on campus in New York City or in the region, both public and private, local and international.

Our first in-person event since the beginning of the pandemic was a gathering of Columbia alumni living in Tunisia, organized with the Columbia Alumni Association in late 2021. Then, slowly, the frequency of events resumed, involving in-person, hybrid, and online public events, ranging from public health to history, business, cinema studies, and current affairs, to name a few. We also hosted tens of Columbia students, undergraduates, and graduates, visiting Tunisia in groups or individually.

This past year, furthermore, we celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of the Teachers College-Tunisia Foreign Language Teacher Education Project, as well as the first cohort of the Logical Reasoning in Human Genetics course. We also co-organized the City Diplomacy series of workshops for West and North African municipal leaders, as well as an International workshop on 16th-century Mediterranean art history.

The following pages are an attempt to catch the achievements of 2021-2022, the year we returned to a semblance of normality, achievements that were realized thanks to our partners, supporters, and the dedicated staff of CGC Tunis.



Youssef Cherif, GSAS '09
Director, Columbia Global Centers | Tunis
Columbia University

About the Center

Established in 2018 and Located in the heart of Tunis, Columbia's ninth global center represents the West and North African regions and is a venue for research, conferences, workshops, networking, and exhibitions, used by Columbia affiliates as well as local institutions and organizations to exchange expertise and co-produce knowledge.

What is CGC Tunis' mission?

With the establishment of CGC Tunis, Columbia will be one of a handful of American universities in North and West Africa offering a scholarly contribution to a public largely unfamiliar with the U.S. education system and U.S. academia. And it goes

both ways: until 2011, only a few Columbia (and North American) scholars showed interest in West and North Africa, which points to gaps that the Center aims to fill. CGC Tunis, therefore, strives to become the bridge to American education for West and North African students and to be the conduit facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise between Columbia and the region.

How does CGC Tunis accomplish this mission?

CGC Tunis has always worked on building ties with local partners, engaging Columbia faculty and students, and organizing joint activities with the Columbia Alumni Association and the Columbia Arab Alumni Association. Also, as a Center situated in the heart of the Mediterranean, CGC Tunis frequently cooperates with the three nearby Global Centers of Paris, Istanbul, and Amman, as well as with the other African center, in Nairobi.



What are the main themes of the Tunis Center?

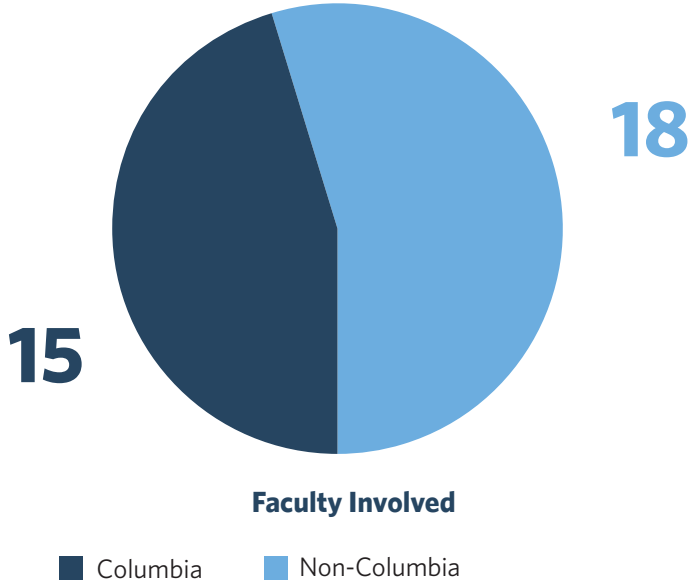
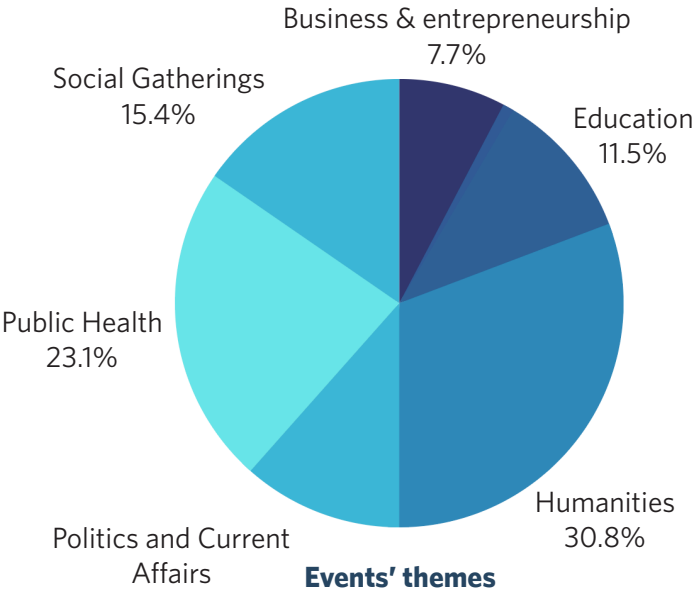
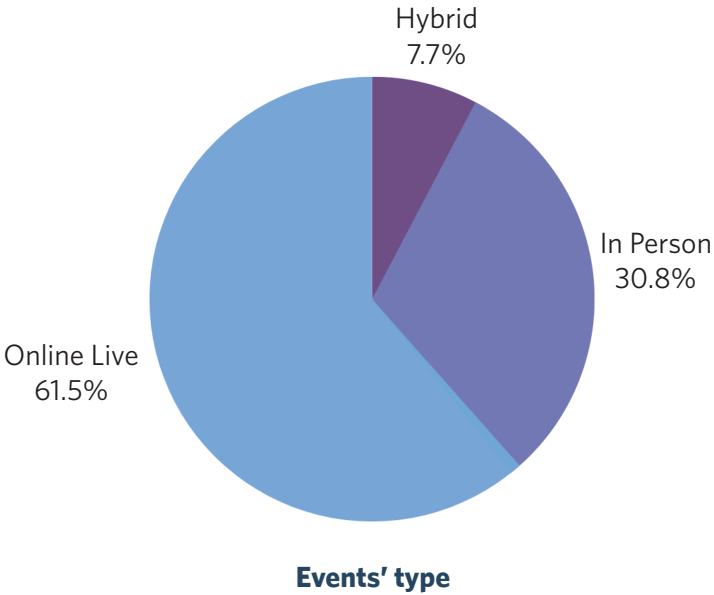
From humanities, political science, and education to public health, business, and entrepreneurship, the Tunis Center has a multidisciplinary focus. Through its programs and events, it welcomes internationally renowned guests and focuses on various axes that attract a diverse audience, with a single goal: to produce knowledge and connect the local to the global and vice versa.

Where can you find us?

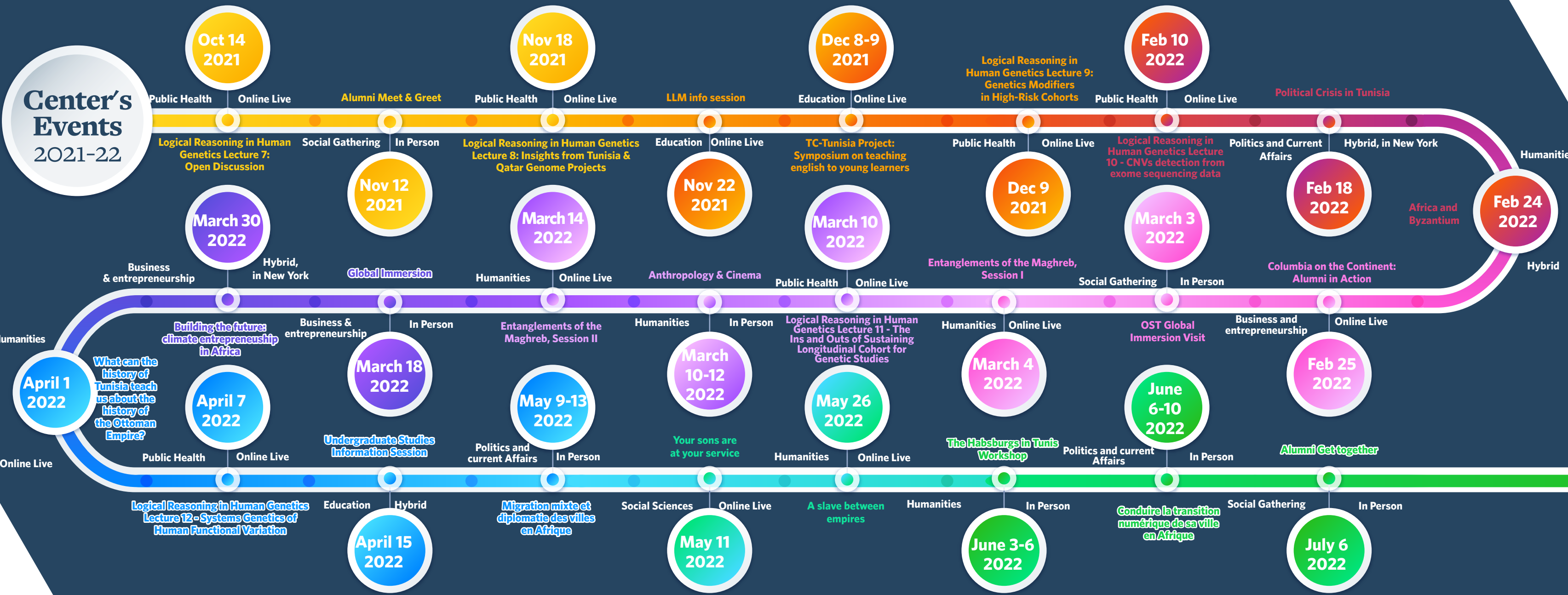
The Center is located in a refurbished 1930s building in the European City of Tunis, called Le15. Situated on the third floor, its balconies overlook Barcelona Place on one side and the Old Municipality of Tunis on the other. Visitors to the Center can enjoy picturesque views of the Medina of Tunis (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), as well as the European City and its Art Nouveau landmarks. The rooftop boasts an even more impressive view, including scenes of the Mediterranean Sea and the hill of ancient Carthage (another UNESCO World Heritage Site). Along with its reading/meeting rooms and modern facilities, the users of CGC Tunis have access to two large conference rooms at Le15, as well as the rooftop for receptions and other open-air events. The ground floor of Le15 is an art gallery called Central. The users of the Center are, consequently, immersed in Tunisia's past, present and future.



Key stats 2021-2022



Center's
Events
2021-22





HUMANITIES

1 History & Art History

Habsburgs in Tunis

The **Habsburgs in Tunis (1535- 1574)** workshop was organized by Columbia Global Centers | Tunis in partnership with the Columbia University in the City of New York Department of Art History & Archeology, Getty Foundation, I Tatti - The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies (Harvard University), and Laboratoire Régions et Ressources patrimoniales de Tunisie (Université De la Manouba, Tunisia).

During five days, 25 International and Tunisian scholars gathered to discuss Mediterranean

history during the Habsburg era, and examine the production of artworks related to the capture of Tunis as well as the looting of the city's artworks and antiquities.



In addition to the sessions held at Columbia Global Centers | Tunis, we had a launch event at Instituto Cervantes Tunez, in partnership with the latter and the Embassy of Spain in Tunisia, and we organized guided tours of Carthage, Sidi Bousaid, and the Medina of Tunis.



The last day was dedicated to highlighting the important work of local stakeholders in addressing the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean as part of the "Connecting Art Histories" initiative, which focuses on revisiting histories of the Mediterranean to reemphasize connections between Europe and Africa. Thus, a group of participants drove to Zarzis in southern Tunisia to discover the region and visit the "Jardins d'Afrique", accompanied by artist Rachid Koraichi, who is advocating for a decent sepulture for the migrants who die in the sea.



Africa and Byzantium

Building on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's groundbreaking exhibitions exploring the interactions of artistic cultures of Byzantium and its surrounding regions, Dr. Andrea Achi's lecture «Africa and Byzantium» was linked to her recent work and it showcased translations of Byzantine art by artists working in African regions around the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. These arts attest to connections between far-flung global networks, linking cities on trade routes in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean. The talk featured images of large-scale frescoes and mosaics with luxury goods, metalwork, jewelry, panel paintings, and illuminated manuscripts, dating from the late antique to the present. It focused on several interconnected themes central to the visual arts of the region: trade, monasticism, imperial and episcopal authority, as well as diverse Christianities and ethnicities.

Meetings between Dr. Achi and the US Embassy in Tunis were held at CGC Tunis, and her visit resulted in the signing of an MoU between Tunisia's Ministry of Culture and the Met. A Met exhibition with Tunisian artifacts could see the light as early as 2023.



“

the exhibition will shift perceptions on identity and memory in Africa and what it means to be African. I want the visitor, after walking through the exhibition, to have a new picture in their mind of both Byzantium and Africa.

”



Dr. Andrea Achi

Barnard College Alumna & Assistant Curator
at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art

What can the History of Tunisia Teach us about the History of the Ottoman Empire?

Dr. M'hamed Oualdi

Professor of history at Sciences Po-Paris

Columbia Global Centers in Istanbul, Paris, and Tunis hosted **Dr. M'hamed Oualdi** and **Dr. Youssef Ben Ismail** to discuss the recent interest of Ottomanists in writing about the Ottoman history of North Africa. Taking the Ottoman autonomous province of

Tunis as a case study, **Dr. Oualdi** spoke about the Ottoman Burial politics in the 1880s, while **Dr. Ben Ismail** focused on Tunisian autonomy and Ottoman Belonging.

CGC Tunis then hosted Dr. M'hamed Oualdi for another event, in person.



Dr. Youssef Ben Ismail

Historian of the Ottoman Mediterranean and modern North Africa
Lecturer at Columbia University

In recent years, historians of the Maghrib have begun to challenge this state of affairs. Bringing the region into the Ottoman fold, they started to write an Ottoman history of North Africa. Taking the Ottoman autonomous province of Tunis as a case study, this panel answered this question: «What can Maghrib history teach us about the history of the Ottoman Empire?»



2▪ Anthropology & Cinema

A regular guest of the Tunis Center, professor of film studies at Columbia University in New York City and former program director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center, Richard Peña, shared his knowledge of film studies in a series of meetings with Tunisian film enthusiasts and students.



Richard Peña at the department of Anthropology, University of Tunis El Manar



Prof. Peña led a 3-day course at the Anthropology Department of the Institut Supérieur des Sciences Humaines de Tunis (University of Tunis El Manar) where he interacted with around 10 professors and 40 students. From Nanouk the Eskimo directed by Robert Flaherty to Dead Birds by Robert Gardener, the course examined 125 years of the history of anthropological cinema with fruitful debates on the relationship to the other in cinema, ethical issues in filmmaking, the technical specificity of documentary/anthropological film, etc.

Debating "The Batman"

A screening of The Batman (Matt Reeves, 2022) followed by a debate with Pr. Richard Peña was organized by the Tunis center jointly with Cinémadart and attended by Tunisian cinephiles.



3▪ Columbia University Press Book Series

Entanglements of the Maghreb

Two sessions were co-organized by the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM) and Columbia Global Centers | Tunis in partnership with the Columbia Middle East Institute (MEI) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany).

The book is distributed by CUP in North America.

Guest Speakers: Dr. Christoph Schwarz, Pr. Samia Kassab-Charfi

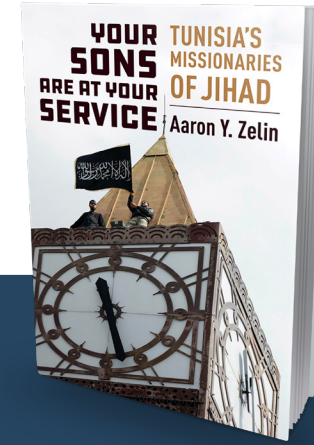
Moderators: Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff, Pr. Rachid Ouassa



Your sons are at your service

Guest Speaker: Dr. Aaron Zelin

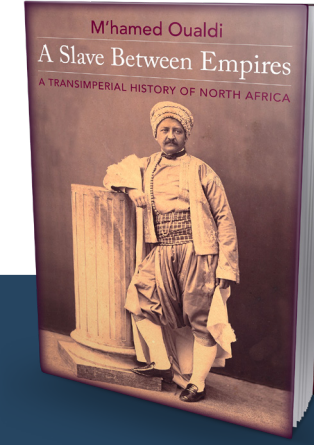
Moderator: Dr. Eya Jrad



A slave between empires

Guest Speaker: Dr. M'hamed Oualdi

Moderator: Dr. Ines Mrad Dali





EDUCATION

1• The Teachers College Tunisia Project

The Tunis Center is committed to being a leader in education in West and North Africa. It has built strong relationships with the academic communities at Columbia University as well as in the region where it operates. Through academic programs, public events, and research projects, the Tunis Center aims to promote knowledge in the region and beyond.

TC-Tunisia Foreign Language Teacher Education Project is a two-year initiative that was designed by Teachers College, CGC Tunis, the U.S. Department of State, and the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education. Launched in February 2021, this project has provided professional development in English language teaching to 46 participants selected from ten higher education institutions in nine Tunisian provinces.



For this Annual Report, We had the chance to interview **Dr. Zhaohong Han** about her

experience as Director of the TC-Project Tunisia.

Tell us more about the TC-Project?

TC-Tunisia, a project co-sponsored by the United States Embassy in Tunis, the Tunisia Ministry of Scientific Research and Higher Education, the Columbia University Global Center in Tunis, and Columbia University's Teachers College, provides professional development in teaching English to young learners in Tunisia. The project kicked off in early 2021, amid a confluence of local and global socio-political, economic, and health crises. The first cohort of participants were 30 frontline instructors of English selected from ten higher education institutions across nine provinces in Tunisia.

The first edition of the TC project is nearing completion, how was your experience as a director?

As Director of TC-Tunisia, I'm proud of leading this extraordinary and historically unprecedented, transnational project and embrace the opportunity to innovate and test the project's resilience and rigor in these challenging times. Now as the project heads into its home stretch, in retrospect I'm doubly proud of what the project has been able to accomplish so far: Not only has the curriculum been implemented without any compromise but also the amount and quality of learning that comes out of the first cohort of participants have been nothing short of remarkable - solid and penetrating. More profoundly, the experience - inspirational and motivational - of working closely with project participants is opening up further avenues of collaboration, breeding new initiatives for advancing and substantiating the work started and its scope of impact. I'm thankful to our co-sponsors for their stalwart support and to our project participants for their dedication, passion, and hard work. Tunisia should be eternally hopeful because of them.

Participant's testimonial

Maryam Megdiche is a University Professor at the Higher Institute of Social Sciences and Education in Gafsa, where she has been teaching for three years.

Most teachers in Tunisia are aware of the fundamental problems of our education system, and of the specific issues of primary and secondary education, as well as the dilemmas of higher

A YEAR OF CHALLENGES AND CHANGE



It was the best of times, it was the worst of times



Charles Dickens,
A Tale of Two Cities



education. It is very common for teachers to privately deal with their daily frustration. In fact, we know what the problems are and we can even explain the reasons behind the learners' reluctance, and the general atmosphere of disengagement and lack of motivation. However, we are also aware of the fact that we, unfortunately, have little if any influence on the political decisions that control the educational reforms.

The year 2020 was a year of challenges and change. Teachers were asked to opt for online teaching, regardless of the fragile infrastructure and of the resource inequality between regions that is, at times, flagrant. Therefore, in addition to the destabilizing impact of the pandemic, we had to try, at times through personal effort only, to keep up with the flourishing online teaching. We had to keep our equally confused students continuously involved and motivated to learn.

The TC-Tunisia Foreign Language Teacher Education Project assembled a number of teachers and gave them the opportunity to voice their grievances, to discuss the

challenges they face on a daily basis and to try to find answers to their questions. It represents a safe space in which we can share and exchange experiences, opinions and ideas.

I think that this program helped us develop a deeper sense of agency. I would say that I have become more aware of our own power to make a difference. We were offered tools to evaluate and assess the Tunisian official teaching programs. We were also exposed to the latest research, which helped us renew and regenerate our teaching strategies and learn more about the latest advances in education and assess the extent to which they might be compatible with the specificities of our country, and the particular needs of our learners.

So, in these times of crisis, despite the confusion and the frustration, we can still broaden our horizons, create change, opportunities and make a contribution through the connections that we can build within our community of teachers.

2▪ Information Sessions about Studying at Columbia

In the pursuit of our goal to put a spotlight on higher education opportunities in the US, Columbia Global Centers | Tunis is always looking to engage with potential prospective students by organizing information sessions that shed light on the process of applying to American universities.

The first session, organized in partnership with The Nairobi Global Center and Columbia Law School (CLS), presented two LLM program options and discussed how to apply, finance the degree, and what it is like to be a student at CLS.

The second session was held at the American Corner of Tunis, in collaboration with U.S. Embassy Tunis, EducationUSA, Columbia College, and Columbia Engineering. EducationUSA Advisor Ilhem Daadaa, Director of Admissions at CC Whitney R. Green, and the US Consul Julie M. gave an introduction to education in the U.S, the Columbia University application process, and the visa process.



WELCOME TO COLUMBIA GLOBAL CENTERS | NAIROBI

3 Virtual Global Internships

Since its launch, the Columbia Global Centers Virtual Internship Program has offered more than 750 opportunities for almost 400 undergraduate and graduate Columbia students across the globe.

Columbia Global Centers | Tunis offered Columbia students virtual internships at its center or with its local and regional partners. This experience allowed them to develop their talents while deepening their knowledge of the West and North African regions. The program has generated a large number of applications showing great

interest in the region where the Tunis Center is located. Among the Tunisian partners who have participated in this initiative are:



Some of our partners on the Virtual Global Internships Program



Virtual Internships Testimonials

My experience at Actawa Ventures was an eye-opening one. I gained valuable exposure into the emerging early-stage investment landscape in North Africa, exploring opportunities as well as challenges faced by the regional industry. I also had the chance to practice many skills, including strategizing the investment screening process,

presenting a convincing case on impact investing to potential investors, and conducting desktop research.

I am deeply interested in venture capital, so this internship is a great opportunity for me to deep dive into an emerging market and learn about the exciting startup trends here. This internship helped me better understand the North African region, since I conducted research into gender and socioeconomic gaps in Tunisia and projected the social impact of Actawa Ventures, as an early-stage impact investing fund which specializes in women and youth-focused startups.

Even though the time difference between Tunis and New York is significant, the internship schedule is flexible, allowing me to balance it with school work during the semester.

The founders at Actawa Ventures are some of the nicest people I have met, giving me a lot of space to learn and grow during the internship. North Africa is also an interesting region to explore, with lots of government incentives that are starting to cultivate a vibrant entrepreneurial scene.



I gained valuable exposure into the emerging early-stage investment landscape in North Africa, exploring opportunities as well as challenges faced by the regional industry.

Nicole Zhou
(from Australia)
Actawa Ventures Virtual Intern
B.A. Candidate in Economics and
Anthropology
Columbia College'24



PUBLIC HEALTH

Logical Reasoning in Human Genetics

The course is led by the following steering committee:

Joseph Terwilliger, Columbia University

Joseph Lee, Columbia University

Sonia Abdelhak, Institut Pasteur de Tunis, Tunisia

Yosr Hamdi, Institut Pasteur de Tunis, Tunisia

Ghada Rammeh, National Research Center, Egypt

Aisha Nasef, Authority of Natural Science Research and
Technology and Ministry of Higher Education and Research in
Tripoli, Libya.

Youssef Cherif, Columbia Global Centers | Tunis

Jos Harald H. Göring, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Jean MacCluer, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Markus Perola, University of Helsinki

Ryan Hernandez, University of California, San Francisco



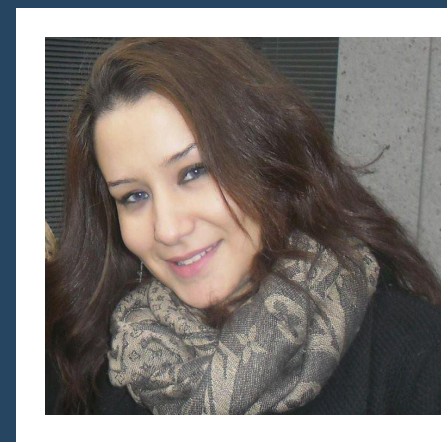
This course introduces basic concepts of human evolution and population genetics by examining the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical approaches to understanding the complex cause and effect relationships underlying human variation.

Designed by Columbia Global Centers | Tunis in partnership with Institut Pasteur de Tunis and led by professors from Columbia University along with a team of prominent geneticists from North Africa and elsewhere, this program was held on a monthly basis and attracted over 1500 participants.

The first cohort of our “Logical Reasoning in Human Genetics” program was concluded last April. The participants who successfully completed 80% of the course received a certificate from CGC Tunis and Institut Pasteur de Tunis.



Insights from Tunisia and Qatar Genome Projects



Dr. Yosr Hamdi
Institut Pasteur de Tunis



Dr. Hamdi Mbarek
Qatar Genome

CNV's Detection from Exome Sequencing Data



Maroua Boujemaa
Institut Pasteur de Tunis

Genetic Modifiers in High-Risk Cohorts



Dr. Joseph Lee
Columbia University

The Ins and Outs of Sustaining Longitudinal Cohort for Genetic Studies



Gladys E. Maestre
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

System Genetics of Human Functional Variation



Dr. Youssef Idaghdour
New York University Abu Dhabi



BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1▪ Global Immersion: Doing Business in North Africa



As part of the **Global Immersion: Doing business in North Africa** course, funded by the Chazen Institute, Kamel Jedidi, CGC Tunis Faculty Advisory Board member, John A. Howard, Professor of Business at Columbia Business School, and his 30 students visited the Tunis Center, their 10th annual visit since 2012. They learned about private equity, management, and more from experts of The Abraaj Group and the Tunisian American Enterprise Fund.

The Center supports the development of entrepreneurship in the region through education and networking, and aims to provide an added-value to the study of economics.

We also took them to Dar Ben Gacem where they learned about tourism, heritage protection and promotion, and sustainable

economy at a panel discussion with NGO representatives and entrepreneurs working in the field.



2▪ Open Startup Tunisia

Open Startup Tunisia aims at creating a regional program that helps build an entrepreneurship ecosystem around the university, allowing youth (especially students and fresh graduates) to venture into entrepreneurship while having access to all the resources needed to thrive. The initiative started with a collaboration between Tunisian faculty and Columbia University staff and faculty.

Long-time partners, CGC Tunis and OST have worked together on capacity building for participants through accompanying them on their annual trip to New York to participate in the Columbia Venture Competition, or by hosting them at the Tunis Center, etc. This year, OST organized part of the Global Immersion Week at Le15 where CGC Tunis is located, reinforcing the partnership between our two organizations.



3▪ Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness in Africa



The ECA program, taught by Columbia Business School faculty, equips entrepreneurs from mid-sized African companies with the skills, tools, and network to professionalize and grow their businesses in today's global environment.

This year, 58 senior executives from 20 companies coming from 10 African countries (Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Tunisia, and Zambia) and representing 15 industries enrolled in the program. The program was co-founded by CGC Tunis Faculty Advisory Committee Vice Chair, Kamel Jedidi, and CGC Tunis helped to promote it.

We talked to some of the participants to hear about their experiences.



Columbia Business School
AT THE VERY CENTER OF BUSINESS™

EC Africa: Testimonials from Tunisia



Fatma Belkadhi
Chief Marketing Officer
Geant & Monoprix Group



MONOPRIX,
TUNISIA

We learned about this program from Columbia Global Centers | Tunis.

This program is very useful for managers who wish to step back and have a bigger view of their business challenges. The lectures were rich, and the real-life cases made them even stronger.

We also loved learning from the participants' different experiences as those of the professors and coaches

The program is helping us to solve a major challenge within our digital marketing strategy that seemed overwhelming. We are confident that our project, which will see the light in the coming months, will make us more relevant to our customers while optimizing our marketing expenses by leveraging our data.

Last but not least, the program created a bond in the team that participated and fueled us with useful returns on experiences.

MONOPRIX



MEGA PRINTING
AND PACKAGING,
TUNISIA



It is a very enriching experience as the program is taught by world-class professors and teachers. The program is multi-disciplinary, well-structured, and comprehensive. The team is very professional and helpful. They teach us tools and techniques, also help us understand our business with its strengths and weaknesses, have a more clear vision, and gave us insights on how to grow beyond our current size.



MEGA
Printing & Packaging



Hanene Kooli Turki
Business & Development Manager
Mega Printing & Packaging

4• High-level talks

Through joint webinars, CGC Tunis aims to make information about the West and North African region accessible to a global audience, and vice-versa, especially when it comes to current challenges such as covid-19 or climate change. Hence the partnership with Columbia's ISERP and ADG.

The Economic impact of covid-19 & Prospects for a Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery in Africa

The Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP) at Columbia University, the Academy of Political Science, Brenthurst Foundation (Johannesburg), in partnership with Columbia Global Centers I Tunis and Columbia Global Centers I Nairobi, worked together on the launch of the report: The Economic Impact of COVID-19 and Prospects for a Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery in Africa. This study answers

the question: How much economic damage was caused and how will African economies recover? Using information from five African countries - Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa - the researchers have produced new insights into the development and structural problems that have arisen, and they have looked at Africa's future trajectory.

LAUNCH OF THE REPORT The Economic Impact of COVID-19 & Prospects for a Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery in Africa

Monday February 28, 2022
1:00 – 2:30pm ET

Virtual Webinar

Register: bit.ly/3rqkaqO



Joseph Stiglitz
Columbia University



Njuguna Ndung'u
African Econ. Research Cons.



Sheila Jasanoff
Harvard University



Heinrich Volmink
Pub. Health Consultant



Lyal White
Contextual Intelligence



Robert Shapiro
Columbia University

Building the future: Climate entrepreneurship in Africa

COLUMBIA
GLOBAL
CENTERS | TUNIS

COLUMBIA
GLOBAL
CENTERS | NAIROBI



With Africa being heavily impacted by climate change, many of its entrepreneurs have developed businesses that promote sustainable development on the continent. This webinar, organized in partnership with the African Development Group (ADG) at Columbia University, invited 3 climate entrepreneurs from Kenya, Tunisia, and Sierra Leone to present, through their startups, solutions to some of the climate challenges.



Jit Bhattacharya
BasiGo (Sierra Leone).

Jit Bhattacharya is the co-founder and CEO of BasiGo, a company looking to revolutionize the public transport sector in Africa through the introduction and financing of electric buses. Jit has been a technology leader in EVs and Li-ion batteries for over 12 years. He previously served as CEO of Mission Motors, CTO of Fenix International, and as a Principal with Factor[e] Ventures.



Jeremiah Thoronka
Optim Energy (Kenya)

Jeremiah Thoronka is an award-winning Innovator, Researcher, and Scholar in energy, environment, sustainability, and development. In 2021, he was awarded the inaugural Global Student Award and the Commonwealth Youth Awards for Excellence in Development Work - Africa; cited for demonstrating exemplary academic excellence and for innovating clean energy systems, promoting locally sustainable solutions, and youth involvement in energy, climate change, and policy.



Hamza Abderrahim
Vélorution (Tunisia)

Hamza Abderrahim is a Tunisian mechanical engineer, co-founder and president of the association "Vélorution Tunisie". This project aims to change the urban mobility practices of the citizens of Greater Tunis and to guide political decision-makers toward the adoption of sustainable mobility.



POLITICS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

1▪ City Diplomacy

City Diplomacy is a course organized by Columbia Global Centers | Tunis and the City Diplomacy Lab at Columbia Global Centers | Paris in partnership with the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF), designed for north and west African municipal officials. These courses aim to strengthen the professional skills of participants in order to apply the skills acquired in designing and managing strategies and projects upon their return to their municipalities.

May has marked the beginning of this program with a workshop tackling the management of migration in African cities.

The “Mixed migration and city diplomacy in Africa: key issues, concepts, and tools for action” course was led by experts from the Mixed Migration Center (Danish Refugee Council) and presented concrete actions and local, national, and international partnerships through which cities can promote the integration and protection of migrants and refugees, in order to formulate their own migration action plan.

The second training took place in June at the Tunis Center. It was dedicated to understanding the Smart City concept and defining a roadmap for urban areas where digitalization can be applied.

The “Driving the Digital Transition: How African local authorities are appropriating the Smart City concept” course allowed participants to identify appropriate local, national, and international partners, and use pilot actions to test their ideas.



During two weeks, 32 participants coming from 16 African cities were able to learn from experts as well as from each other's experiences. Moreover, they enjoyed a guided tour of the municipality of Tunis where they met with the Mayor of Tunis, Mrs. Souad Abderrahim.



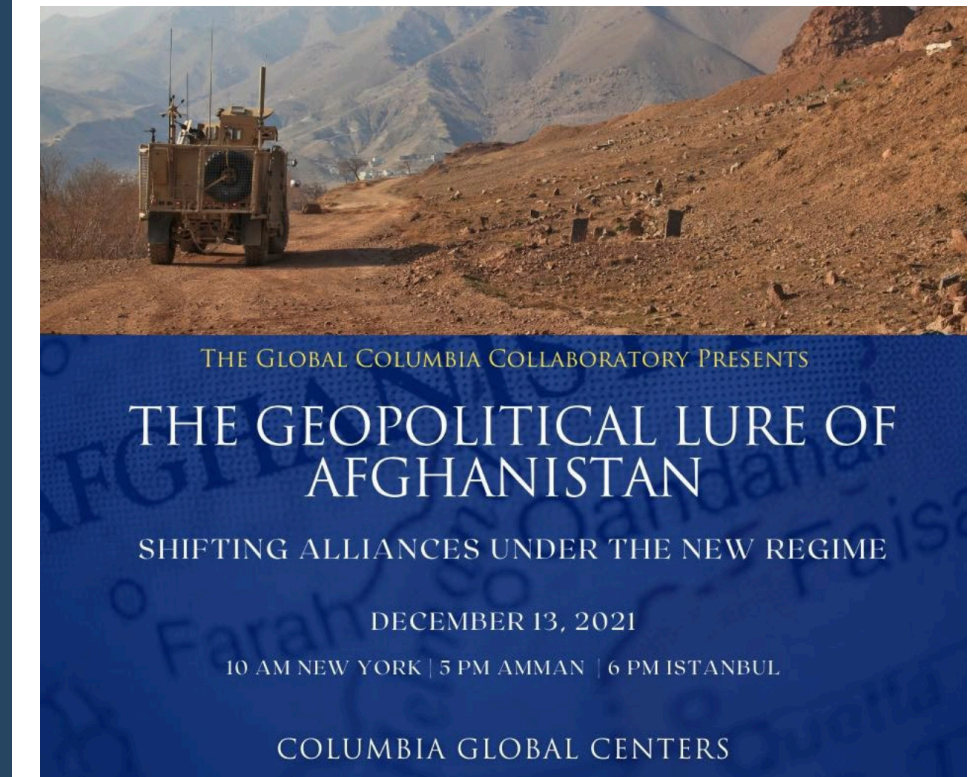
2▪ High-level talks

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, CGC Tunis, along with the other global centers and The Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement, launched the Global Columbia Collaboratory, which provides students with a virtual forum for learning about global issues from international experts and peers around the world.

Exploring The Geopolitical Lure of Afghanistan

Columbia Global Centers and The Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement organized a webinar about 'The Geopolitical Lure of Afghanistan: Shifting Alliances Under the New Regime' where an impressive line-up of panelists explored the developing situation in Afghanistan from a historical and political perspective.

During the event, speakers shared their insights on the ramifications of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, analyzed it within the context of geopolitics, security and diplomacy. Moreover, they investigated the real issues that are driving the conflict in Afghanistan, the implications of the developing situation for neighboring and regional actors, and what a durable and responsible foreign policy towards Afghanistan looks like.



11 Years After the Arab Spring: Political Crisis in Tunisia

Organized in partnership with the African Development Group at Columbia University.

In the last decade, Tunisia was presented as a model country in the Arab Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a democratic “beacon of hope” for a region that seemed exceptional in its authoritarian resilience.

For many foreign observers, the democratic transition was successful; other issues looked secondary. The Arab Spring died everywhere but in Tunisia, commentators assured.

Then, on July 25th, 2021, President Kais Saied deployed the army to the parliament and decided to grab all powers in his hands. Thousands of Tunisians celebrated the event and only a few hundred opposed it in the streets. There was a sense of relief among important segments of the population (Sigma, Emrhod polls). The international condemnations of the “coup” were not matched by scenes of bloodshed and mass arrests, a stark difference from classical putsches. More than six months after the event, the president remains extremely popular, whereas the opposition is weaker than ever (Sigma polls).



In an effort to bring local expertise closer to a global audience, CGC Tunis and the African Development Group (Columbia University) organized a webinar to discuss the political situation in Tunisia and the future of democracy in the MENA region.

But the fact is, the country is slowly reverting to authoritarianism. The problems that Tunisians complained about continue to deepen. Tunisia’s international isolation is growing. And whereas few people dare to praise the pre-July 25th era publicly, there is a growing concern that things have not improved.

What explains this discrepancy between the local and the international? Why did Tunisians seemingly accept to put their democracy on hold? What are the prospects of change in the country now that it left the Democracy track? What is the future of democracy in Tunisia and the Arab MENA region? And what about the future relationships with the European Union, the region’s main partner?

These questions and more were discussed by our guest speakers, Dr. Richard Youngs and Khansa Ben Tarjem.

Dr. Richard Youngs

Senior Fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, Carnegie Endowment



Khansa Ben Tarjem

Doctoral Candidate, University of Lausanne; Visiting Fellow, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University; Visiting Fellow, Crown Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Brandeis University





ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

1• Alumni Events

CGC Tunis works on connecting alumni not only in the North and West African region but also in the entire African continent. In partnership with CGC Nairobi, Columbia Alumni Association, and the African Development Group, CGCT organized the virtual event “Columbia on the

Columbia on the Continent: Alumni in Action

continent: Alumni in action” which aimed to highlight the experience of alumni working in the African continent to students who seek to build a professional career in Africa.

Many Columbia students and affiliates are interested in working on the African continent but do not know where to begin. Since many Columbia alumni already work on the continent working in governments, international organizations, companies, and NGOs, their expertise could benefit many of our members seeking to work on the continent in various capacities. Bridging the gap between the African diaspora and those working to solve the continent’s challenges is one of the main goals of the African Development

Group, and this event would allow Columbia students to see where they could be after graduating. Learning from alumni is essential to determining paths after college, because they went through many of the same challenges we are now in determining what to do after graduation, what programs to apply for, among many other issues.

At the end of the webinar, Columbia students and affiliates left with a concrete understanding of where they could end up after graduation was to bring the challenge and the paths to follow to get there. They also had the added asset of the contact information of alumni working in influential positions on the African continent. Careers can be very overwhelming, but the goal of this event was bring the challenge down to the personal level. These personal interactions gave students a better idea of life after college and hopefully made the prospect less scary.

Thousands of miles separate New York from Tunis, but CGC Tunis still strives to make its premises a hub of Columbia University where alumni can keep in touch with their former colleagues and make new connections with alumni from different backgrounds and nationalities who live or are temporarily in Tunisia or Africa, more broadly. Thus, the Tunis Center works closely with the Columbia Alumni Association and the Columbia Arab Alumni Association to host alumni events and other activities.



Alumni Meet & Greet

We were so glad to be finally able to host Columbia University Alumni in person at our Tunis office in November 2021.

Sanitary measures being respected, we took them for a visit to our rooftop where they had the opportunity to enjoy our wonderful view of the city of Tunis.

A mixture of nostalgia and excitement; of old-time in New York and feel at home again while in Tunis.

In partnership with Columbia Alumni Association.



In Tunisia, as soon as it was possible to organize face-to-face meetings, the Tunis Center invited the alumni twice, once to discover the center and once for dinner in a restaurant in the medina of Tunis.

Reunion of Columbia alumni and students in Tunisia

CGC Tunis has chosen to share the joy of summer with Columbia alumni and students in Tunisia.

Coming from Tunisia, Libya, Rwanda, Uzbekistan, the USA, etc., Columbia alumni and students gathered around a dinner in the Medina of Tunis, organized by Columbia Global Center I Tunis, where they enjoyed a breathtaking view of the Old City during sunset. In partnership with the Columbia Arab Alumni Association and Columbia Alumni Association.



COLUMBIA*alumni*
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Arab Alumni Association
Columbia Alumni Association | CAA

2▪ Meet Ghada Jerfel : a young Tunisian Woman in the Big Apple

Ghada holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics and Statistics from Columbia University in New York and works as an algorithmic FX trader at BNP Paribas in New York. She is also committed to strengthening the community of women in mathematics through her involvement in several societies such as the Columbia chapter of the Association for Women in Mathematics and the Columbia Women's Business Society.

How did you land at Columbia?

I first learned about Columbia University through my brother, who got admitted there but chose to go to a different university. Aware of my dedication to advocacy for women's rights, he recommended that I particularly learn about Barnard college, the undergraduate women's college at Columbia University. In my senior year of high school, while most students were dedicating their time and effort to the national Baccalaureate exam, I was preparing my college applications and Barnard was my top choice. Having always had a co-ed education in Tunisia, I was ready to embark on an undergraduate education journey where women's voice and intellect were at the center of my experience, and where I also had access to a plethora of academic and professional resources at the University and New York City.

What has Columbia University offered you?

My time at Barnard particularly, and Columbia University generally, has been the most challenging yet rewarding and most crucial experience during my transition from a high schooler to a young woman in the Big Apple. My advisors, professors, the organizations I led, the community I took part in, and the career opportunities Columbia offered, were all a pillar to my personal, academic, and professional growth. Majoring in Math and Statistics, I found myself one of a few women in my classes. I saw the need to strengthen a community of women in Math, and in STEM overall, and that's where I helped revive and lead the Columbia Chapter of the Association for Women in Math; and the university was readily available to support this mission, from the Math department to Undergraduate Student life. The students and professors I came to interact with were also crucial to navigating my career options, job interviews, and offers. From long nights in the dorms and in the library helping me practice for my job interviews to connecting me to a network of professionals, to checking up on my progress, I was supported in every step of my career development.



What it is like to be Tunisian at Columbia University?

It's a privilege to be part of the student, and now alumni community at Columbia University. Representation matters, especially that of our Tunisian women who manage to thrive in man-dominated fields. I've also come to realize how grateful and privileged I am for the environment I had in Tunisia from teachers to family to friends, and for the experiences that built my resilience early on. It takes a village.

Being Tunisian at Columbia also means being part of the wider Arab community. That's why I took part in the founding board and now elected executive board of the Columbia Arab Alumni Association, where we aim to unite our alumni in bringing Columbia to the Arab world for the benefit of our home communities.

Columbia alumni from the North and West Africa region are shining all the world. Here is the story of Ghada Jerfel, Barnard College '19.

Discover Tunisia

CGC Tunis would like to introduce the cultures and specificities of West and North Africa to the Columbia community. Taking Tunisia as a base, CGC Tunis often organizes tours and lectures around the region's history, architecture, culinary habits, etc.



Meet CGC Tunis Intern

Freshman student at the Tunis Business School, Nour joined the CGC Tunis team for a 3-month internship where she was able to deepen her knowledge in finance.

Nour Ghsair
Tunis Business School
Finance Intern



As the second month of my internship at Columbia Global Centers I Tunis draws to a close and I reflect back on all I have learned, I realize what a thrilling experience this has been. This internship gives me hands-on experience and key skills I need that I can't get in the classroom. The skills I have gained and the knowledge I am taking away are immeasurable. I could not have asked for a better first internship experience to build a foundation for my career.

This experience has only gotten me more excited to continue in finance for my career. It confirmed that I love the numbers and want to continue with them for a very long time. Not everyone will have a great experience, but being a finance intern is one of the best things I've ever done!

I feel that, during my internship, the most challenging and upskilling thing was multitasking. As a perfectionist, I usually take time going through details so it was challenging in terms of speed and getting the work done at first. But once I learned the jargon of the office, it became easier.

As a freshman student, I don't have a huge experience in finance since we did not cover all the basics yet. It was challenging at first but thanks to my supervisor's patience I quickly broadened my knowledge and learned more.

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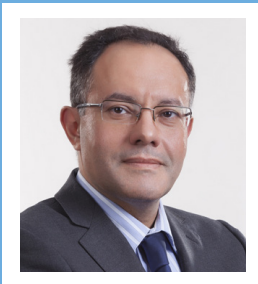
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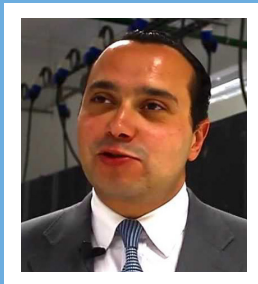
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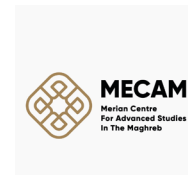


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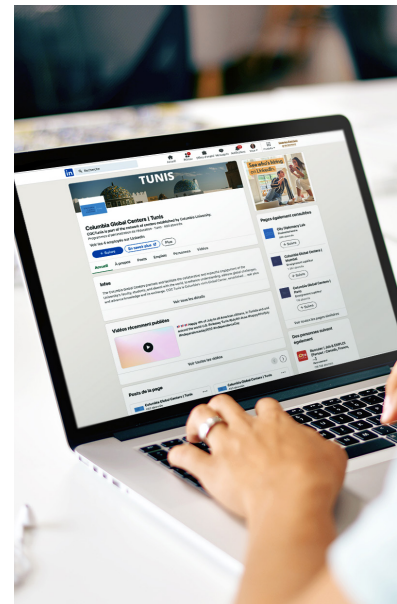
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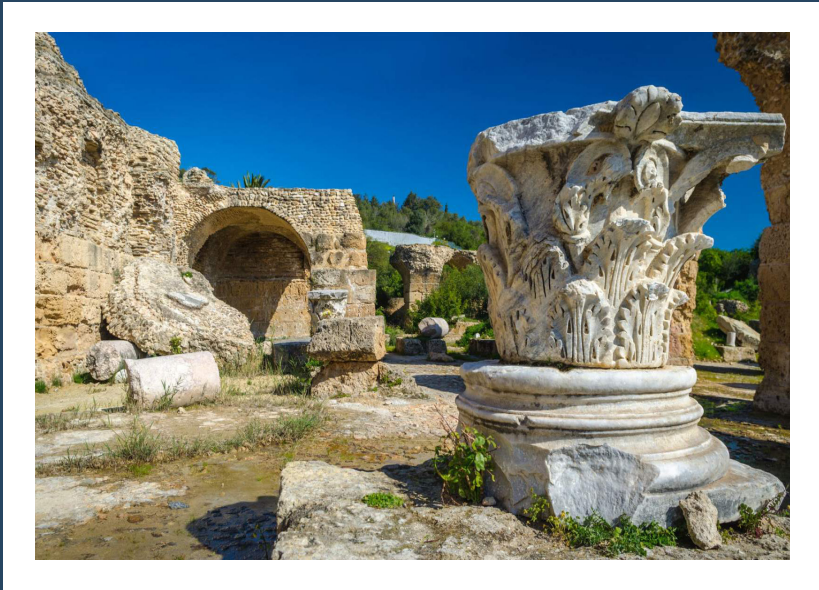
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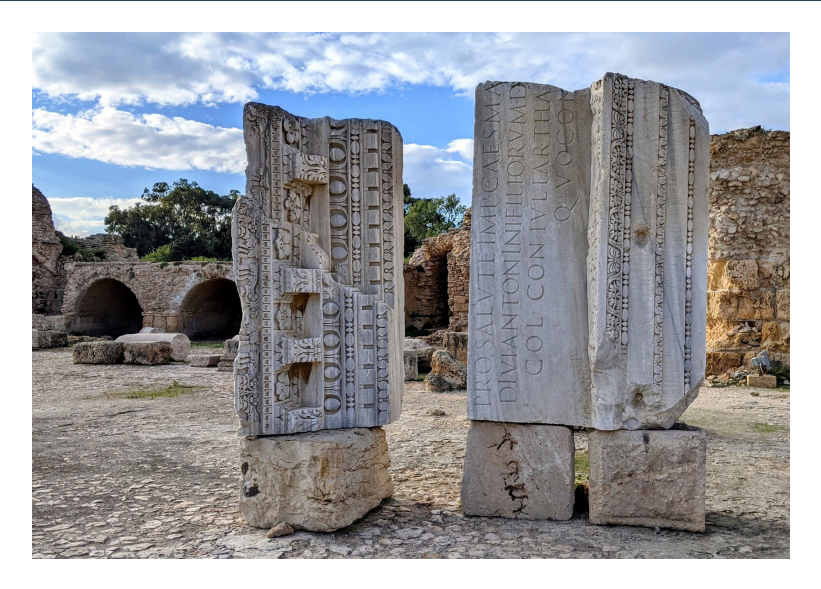
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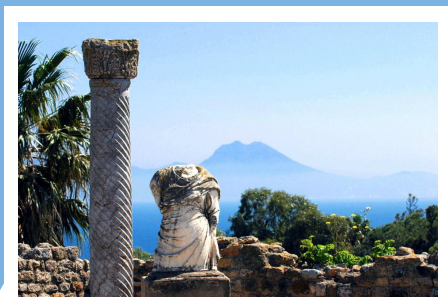
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